

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee on the Governor's Proposed Biennial Budget

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Good afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is [Mary Brigid Culhane](#) and I am here to testify on the Governor's Proposed Biennial Budget.

I am opposed to the proposed cuts to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, including the Regional Mental Health Boards.

*The services funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services are very important to me and the clients that I serve. I at one time was a client and was utilizing the various programs available to me. One such program was Keystone House in Norwalk. Keystone House provided me with an environment to get well and work on myself. After a couple of years I went back to work. I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and became sick shortly after my graduation in 1997. I have been working for 7 years at The F.S. Dubois Center, an outpatient agency part of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.*

*Through my affiliation with the Center, I learned about the Southwest Regional Mental Health Board and the depth of work they do. The board has an ongoing CAC (Catchment Area Council Meeting) that meets regularly and is a venue for consumer and provider alike to talk about mental health initiatives in the community. The clients we serve at the F.S. Dubois Center find the CAC to be a great resource which invites their viewpoint of services they receive and suggestions for additional service. Margaret Watt, Executive Director of the Southwest Regional Mental Health Board has on more than one occasion been a guest speaker at the Consumer Council at F.S. Dubois and asked the council's participants what is working for them at the agency and what are their suggestions on improvements at the agency and the community. The Southwest Regional Mental Health Board has supplied our agency with literature on mental wellness during the month of May, which is Mental Health Awareness Month. We set up 2 informational tables in down town Stamford with literature provided by the Board. The literature ranges from where to go in the community for mental health services to the warning signs of depression or any mental health crisis.*

*I urge you to restore these harmful cuts to ensure crucial services are available to the residents of Connecticut.*

Thank you for your attention to these important services and supports.